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WASHINGTON---With less than three weeks of play remaining, the first half pennant race drew tight as a drum Sunday as the determined Newark Eagles moved into undisputed lead in the loop standings, on the wings of a three-game win streak, followed closely by the Philadelphia Stars, New York Cubans and Homestead Grays. Only two games separated the first four leaders, with the Baltimore Elites five games off the pace.

The Eagles, tied last week with the Stars for the loop lead, edged into the top spot with a double win over the Baltimore Elites, at Trenton, N.J., Saturday, 7-4, and in Newark, Sunday, 5-2. The Sabbath victory was followed by a 2-1 triumph over the N.Y. Black Yankees before 8,000 at Ruppert Stadium, the three teams staging a three-way twin bill.

While the Eagles were snatching two Sunday tilts, the Stars were idle inasmuch as league competition is concerned, and the Cubans and Grays split a doubleheader before 6,500 in Washington. The Cubans were blasted, 15-3, in the nightcap after taking the opener, 6-3.

Newark's Sunday triumphs followed two mid-week setbacks, with the Cubans and Imbo Barnhill taking a 4-1 game at Dexter Park last Monday, and the Grays slamming out a 10-8 win Thursday night in Griffith Stadium.

Meanwhile, the Cubans bowed to the Philly Stars, 6-5, Saturday night in Philadelphia, after playing a 10-10 tie in the same city on Thursday night. In the Thursday twilight bill, Jones Gaines, Baltimore Elite southpaw ace, whitewashed the Stars, 2-0, with a neat three-hit job, before 9,000. The Stars were never a threat as Gaines kept the trio of bingles well scattered and administered the first Shibe Park defeat to Barney Brown.

Superb hurling by Rufus Lewis and Max Manning plus an avalanche of home runs sparked Newark's Sabbath wins. Lewis hit a homer with one on in the second inning, and Johnny Davis clouted a three-run homer in the seventh for all five of the Eagles' tallies in the first game, while Henry Kimbro and Johnny Washington hit four-baggers for the ~~xxxxxx~~ Elites' only two markers. Manning outpitched Newark in the nightcap, 2-1. On Saturday, a rookie, Jim Cole, outlasted Andy Porter as the Eagles won, 7-4.

Barney Morris limited the Grays to six scattered hits in the first game at Washington, and only four errors enabled the Cubans to win as Frank (Groundhog) Thompson, making his initial start with the Grays was equally effective. Three of the miscues were made by Pitcher Bob Thurman, who subbed at first for the injured Buck Leonard. Hortens Minosa hit an inside-the-park homer to spark the Cubans' 8-hit attack.

In an apparent vengeful mood, the Grays routed three Cubans hurlers in the seven-inning nightcap, smashing out 16 hits for a 15-3 victory as Red Fields checked the Latins with a superb five-hit performance. Josh Gibson banded ~~xxxxxxxx~~ two triples and a single to lead the attack.